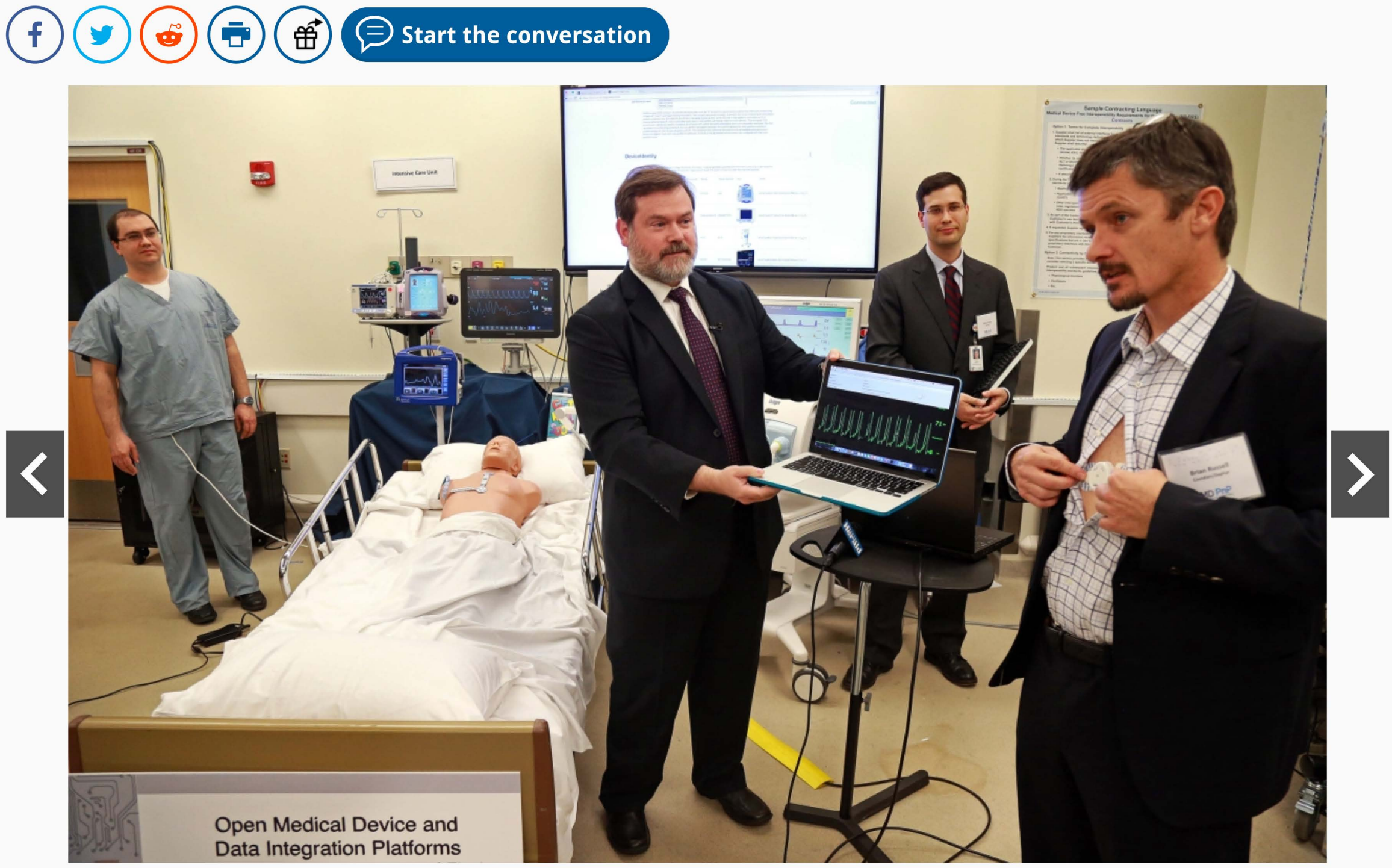
LOCAL NEWS

Doc eyes high-tech ways to fight Ebola



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HUB EFFORT: Dr. Julian Goldman, left, and Brian Russell of Covidien/Zephyr, right, demonstrate high-tech ways to reduce Ebola risk, at Massachusetts General Hospital yesterday. Goldman will give a presentation today to federal officials.

By LINDSAY KALTER |

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A Hub researcher hopes to wow White House officials today with high-tech methods of combating ?Ebola in the U.S., including a robot that delivers medical supplies to patients and a laptop-controlled ventilator.

“Why should doctors and nurses be going into hospital rooms, messing with buttons and knobs, and risk getting the Ebola virus?” asked Dr. Julian Goldman, director of Massachusetts General Hospital’s Medical Device Interoperability Program.

Federal officials at the White House approached Goldman about three weeks ago to explore ways to treat Ebola that would minimize the risk of transmission, he said.

He assembled a group of tech gurus across the industry for a demonstration of various medical devices in Cambridge yesterday ahead of his presentation to the National Science Foundation.

One new technology presented was a small robot — developed at Worcester Polytechnic Institute — that would carry medical supplies between Ebola ?patients and health workers, passing through a tunnel with disinfecting ultraviolet rays.

Brothers Eric and Lawrence Lynn from Columbus, Ohio, also showed off their “patient storm-tracker” software, which would map a patient’s bodily activity in a way that ?resembles a weather map, allowing doctors to remotely monitor in a way they say is easy to track.

“In the same way you’d have geographic locations, you have systems in the body. If the heart rate rises to a dangerous level, it looks like a storm,” Eric Lynn said.

“Sometimes it takes a crisis like the Ebola virus” to push forward health technologies, Goldman said, adding that many of the devices presented at the demonstration could be available within 60 days if given the go-ahead by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.